GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2576
ANSWERED ON:18.03.2008
FIELD TRIALS OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED SEEDS
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Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) Whether extensive Genetically Modified (GM) field Trials are going on in rice and groundnut in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the States where such field trials are bging done;

(c) whether the field trials are fraught with risk leading to GM contamination of the neighboring conventional crops; and

(d) if so, the preventive meassures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (KAPIL SIBAL)

(a) No Sir. The field trials on rice and groundnut are not extensive as they are only small trials at multi-locations to assess the yield parameters, effect on non target pests, pollen flow studies and effect on rhizosphere. These tests are for assessing the environmental safety as well as benefit analysis of the GM rice and groundnut in comparison to the conventional rice and groundnut.

(b) Field trials on transgenic rice are being conducted in an experimental area not exceeding one acre per location at Tamil Nadu (Tanjore & Coimbatore); Maharashtra (Raigad & Bhandara); West Bengal (24 South Parganas & Midnapur); Bihar (Gaya); Jharkhand (Ranchi); Karnataka (Davangere & Mandya); and Gujarat (Anand).No field trial on transgenic groundnut is being conducted.

(c) & (d) No Sir. There are standard methods of avoiding contamination specified by the regulatory system like installing physical/biological barriers around the GM crop under trial, keeping a specified isolation distance from the neighboring field and not planting such trial where related same crop of rice or groundnut is cultivated.The standard operating procedures and protocols have been specified by the regulatory system.